AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 22, with the following:

Osteoprotegerin may thus be fused to another protein, polypeptide or the like, e.g., an immunoglobulin or a fragment thereof. The fusion may be direct, or via a short linker peptide which can be as short as 1 to 3 amino acid residues in length or longer, for example, 13 amino acid residues in length. Said linker may be a tripeptide of the sequence E-F-M (Glu-Phe-Met), for example, or a 13-amino acid linker sequence comprising Glu-Phe-Gly-Ala-Gly-Leu-Val-Leu-Gly-Gly-Gln-Phe-Met (SEQ ID NO: 13) introduced between the osteoprotegerin sequence and the immunoglobulin sequence.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 5, with the following:

The full length cDNA coding sequence of OPG was then cloned by reverse transcriptase PCR using the following primers based on the cDNA sequence available in the EMBL database (accession number U94332): OPG F 5' CGG GAT CCGCCA CCA TGA ACA AGT TGC TGT GCT (SEQ ID NO: 7) and OPG R 5' AAG CTC GAG TTA TAA GCA GCT TAT TTT (SEQ ID NO: 8) at 50 pmole each in a 50 .mu.l reaction mixture containing 0.3 mM dNTPs, 1 mM MgSO.sub.4, 5 .mu.l of normal human dermal (foreskin) fibroblast cDNA template (prepared as described above) 5 .mu.l of 10.times.Pfx amplification buffer (Life Technologies) and 1 .mu.l of Platinum Pfx DNA polymerase (Life Technologies). The reaction mixture was heated at 94 C for 2 min then subjected to 35 cycles of PCR as follows: 94.degree. C. 15 s, 55 C for 30 s and 68 C for 1 min. The amplification products were analyzed on 1% agarose gels in 1.times.TAE buffer (Life Technologies) and PCR products migrating at the predicted molecular mass (1205 bp) were purified from the gel using the Wizard PCR purification kit (Promega).